TAMAN NEGARA

Ancient Wonder of Nature



Visit Malaysia
Celebrating 50 Years of Nationhood

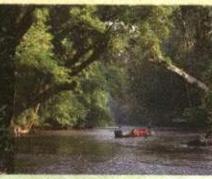
Malaysia Truly Asia



Glossary

Bukit	-	Hill	*Kampung*	-	Village
Gua	-	Cave	*Kuala*	-	Estuary
Gunung	-	Mountain	*Sungai*	-	River







Legend

- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- Railway
- Water Features
- State Boundary
- Bridge
- Small Town
- Trekking Trail
- Canopy Walk
- Rafflesia
- Tree
- Peak (964m)
- Hill
- Campsite
- Resort/Chalet
- Park Building
- Hide
- Waterfall
- Cave
- Dam
- Jetty
- Village

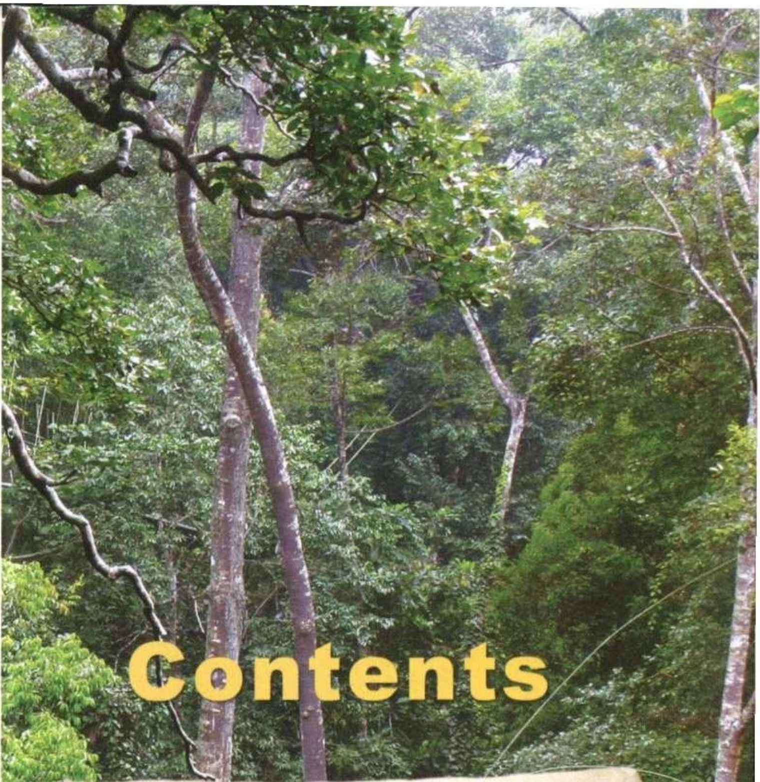
Note: Legend applies to all maps in the brochure



The Four Access Points into Taman Negara

Getting to Taman Negara is not at all difficult. There are four easily accessible entryways, roughly one for each direction of the compass:

1. *South* – *Kuala Tahan in Pahang*
2. *West* – *Merapoh, Sungai Relau in Pahang*
3. *North* – *Kuala Koh in Kelantan*
4. *East* – *Tanjung Mentong, Tasik Kenyir in Terengganu*



Contents

Ancient Wonder of Nature





Taman Negara. Two words in Bahasa Melayu, the national language of Malaysia, which conjure images of a giant green garden filled with exotic flowers and creatures. The word 'taman' means both 'park' and 'garden' in Malay while 'negara' means 'nation' – together they translate simply as 'National Park'. Even though there are certainly many other national parks elsewhere in Malaysia, Taman Negara remains the patriarch of them all, with the pedigree to back it up.

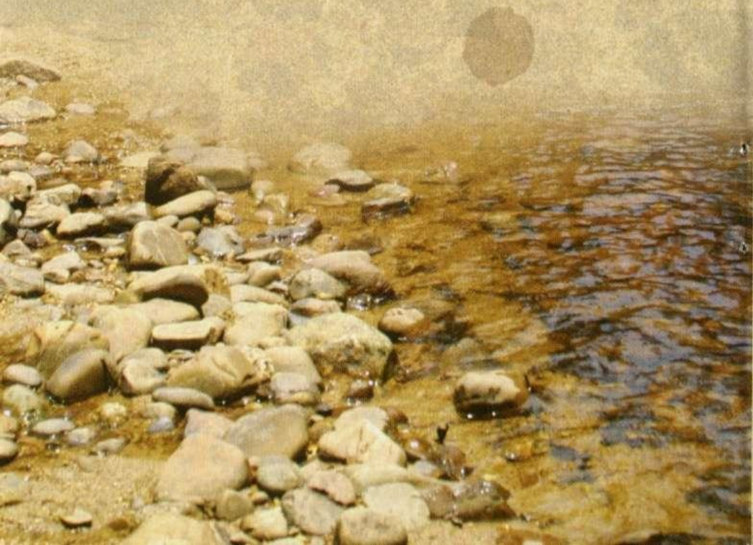
As the first and oldest official Protected Area in the country, Taman Negara was originally called King George V National Park. Declared in 1938 by the Sultans of 3 states Kelantan, Pahang and Terengganu upon King George's Silver Jubilee and to preserve the land's indigenous nature in perpetuity, it was gazetted separately by each state's Enactments in 1938 – 1939. The park was renamed Taman Negara after the nation gained independence in 1957.

Taman Negara is the largest of all Protected Areas in Peninsular Malaysia with 4,343 sq km. The Pahang section of the park is the largest at 2,477 sq km, followed by Kelantan's portion at 1,043 sq km and Terengganu's at 853 sq km. The Peninsula's highest peak, Gunung Tahan at 2,187m rises in the Pahang sector of the park.

Taman Negara is indeed one of the oldest rainforests in the entire world, estimated at 130 million years old. The abundance and diversity of nature is phenomenal in Taman Negara, one of the world's most complex and rich ecosystems. A veritable treasure of the planet, it is to be saved for posterity.

Managed by Jabatan PERHILITAN (Department of Wildlife and National Parks), Taman Negara's future is secure, with stated objectives as follows:

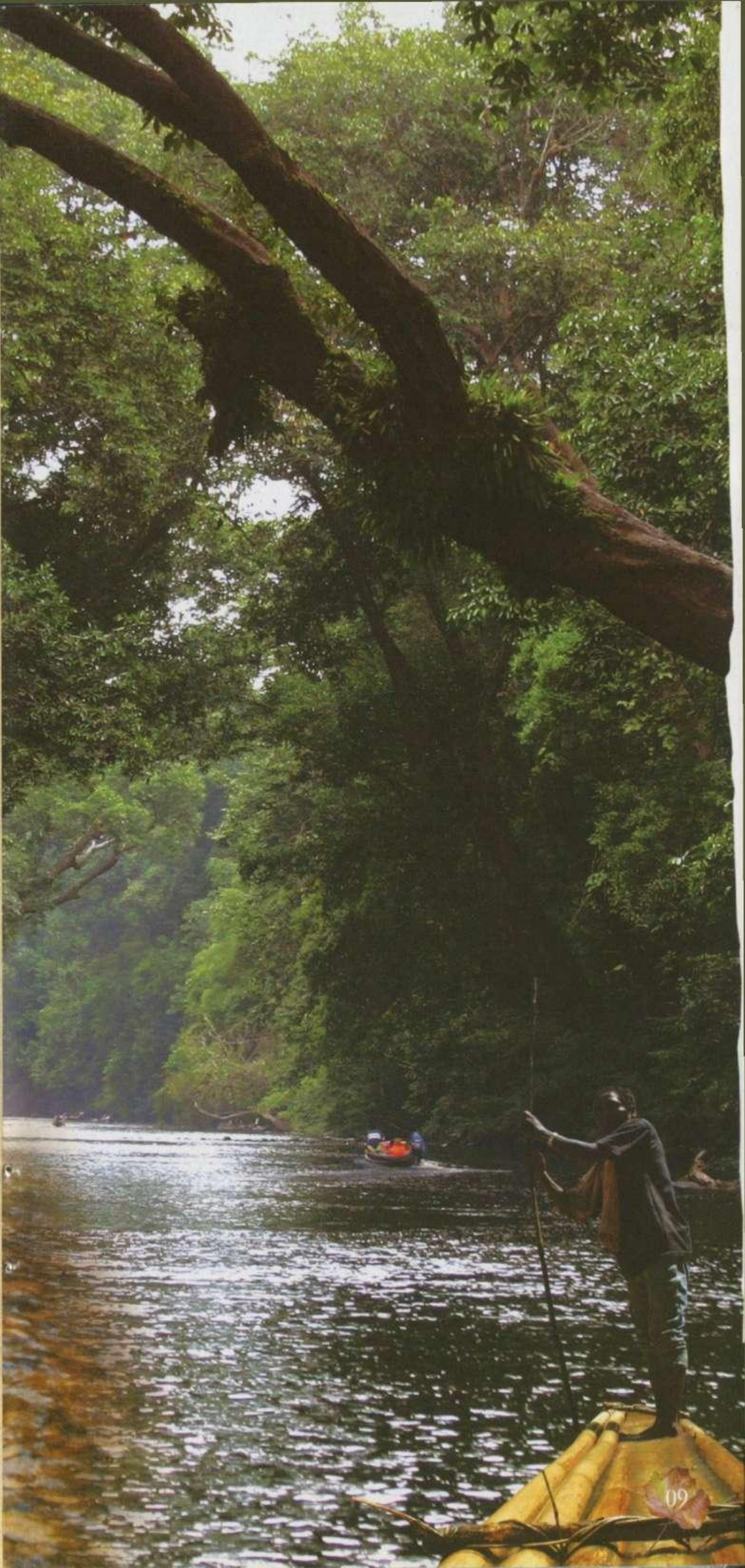
- To protect and conserve the flora and fauna in Taman Negara and to maintain the tropical rainforest ecosystem.
- To propagate species of flora and fauna.
- To manage Taman Negara as a sustainable recreational area.
- To conserve all objects and places of historical, aesthetic or scientific interest.
- To provide a natural lab for research on species and habitat found in the tropical rainforest for management purposes.



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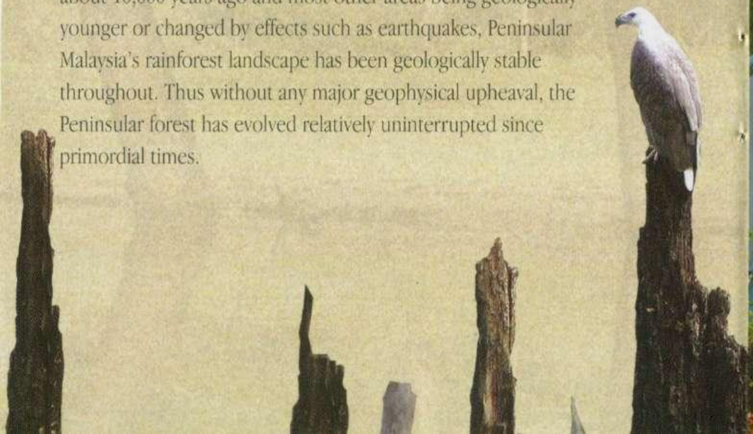


Sights to Behold



In this 130-million year old rainforest, Taman Negara embodies a tropical haven of verdant undulating landscapes crossed by rivers with rapids and waterfalls. Tucked within are secret caves set amidst rising ridges and mountains. An undisturbed natural paradise.

While the northern hemisphere was affected by the Ice Age until about 10,000 years ago and most other areas being geologically younger or changed by effects such as earthquakes, Peninsular Malaysia's rainforest landscape has been geologically stable throughout. Thus without any major geophysical upheaval, the Peninsular forest has evolved relatively uninterrupted since primordial times.

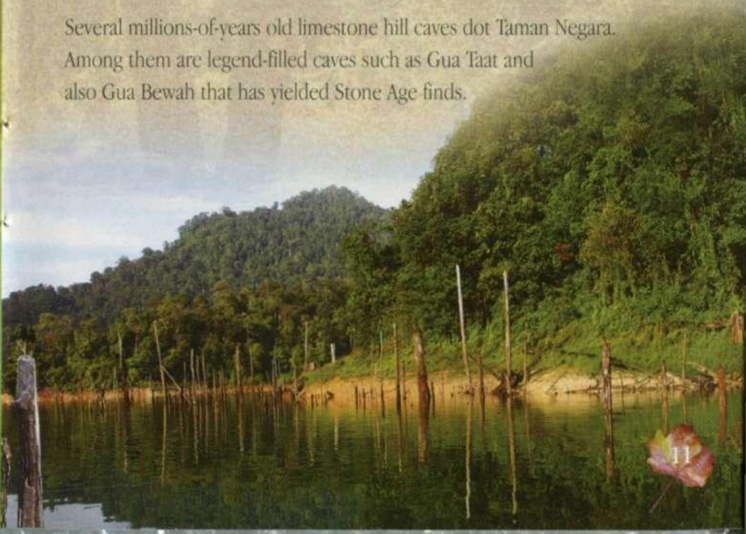




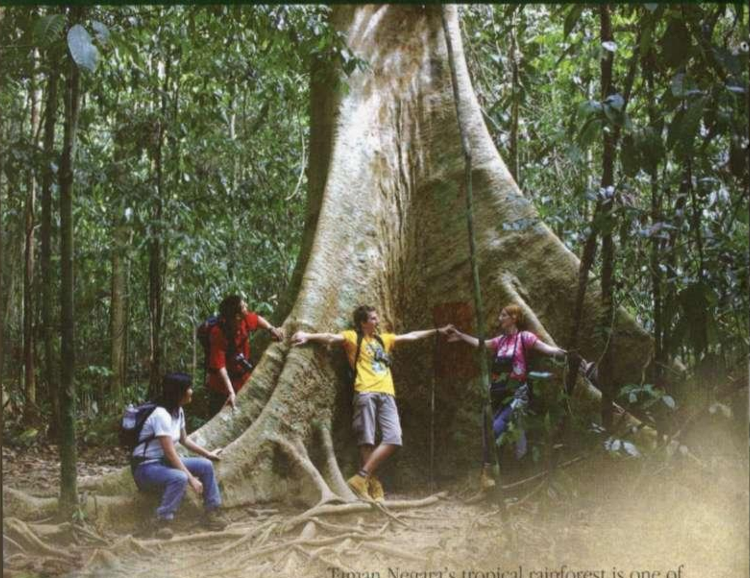
In the north-west of the park lies Gunung Tahan, the tallest mountain in the Malay Peninsular at 2,187m, while Gunung Gagau at 1,376m straddles the borders of all 3 states that make up Taman Negara. From on high, the park is a spectacular spread of rolling hills blanketed in lush greens.

There are pristine rivers in Taman Negara boasting waterscapes from mirror-still reflections to wild rapids and scenic waterfalls. With exotic names such as Tembeling, Tahan, Terenggan and Relau, these *sungai* or rivers including the tributaries and streams together number in the hundreds. Their waters range from crystal clear to coffee brown from the natural soil sediments. Rainforest rivers like these, which flow from peat soil virgin mountain forest catchments with no major human settlement or cultivation alongside, are now rare in the world.

Several millions-of-years old limestone hill caves dot Taman Negara. Among them are legend-filled caves such as Gua Taat and also Gua Bewah that has yielded Stone Age finds.



A Plethora of Species

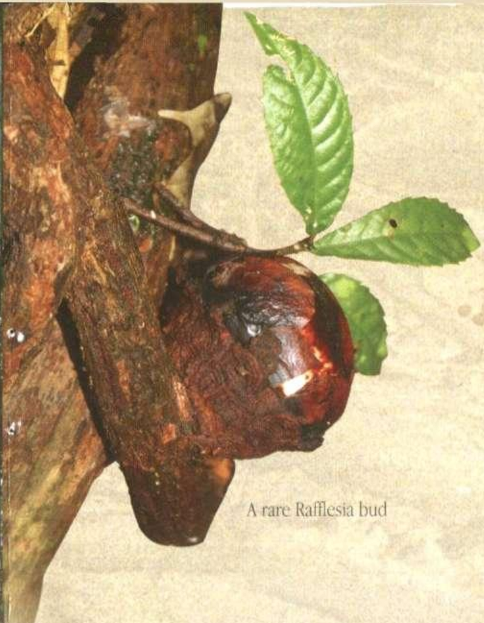




Taman Negara's tropical rainforest is one of the most complex and rich ecosystems in the world. The lowland dipterocarp forest covering much of the park is home to about 14,000 species of plants and trees more than other forests in the world. The tallest tree in Southeast Asia, the buttressed *tualang* (Koompassia excelsa) grows here, typically reaching over 50m heights.





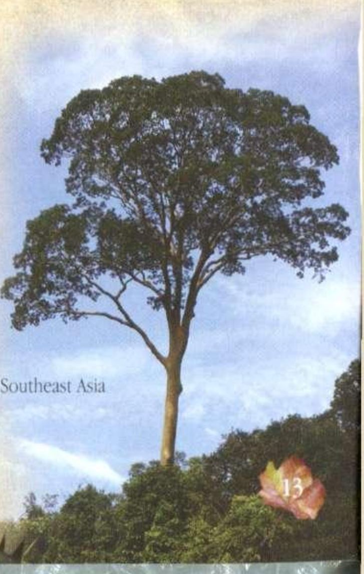


A rare Rafflesia bud

The lush moist habitats support huge evergreen dipterocarp trees that lord over the forest canopy, with a whole range of different plant layers below. At altitudes of 750m, montane forests of oaks, conifers, rattans and dwarf palms thrive. Above 1,500m, 'cloud forests' emerge, with typically short trees shrouded by clouds at least part of each day.

To the untrained observer, the jungle is just a vast expanse of green with little differentiation. But to the knowledgeable, each plant type is part of a treasure trove of all kinds of food, herbs, medicines, balms, fuels and resins as well as household and building materials. Preserved well, the rainforest is of great life-giving value to humanity.





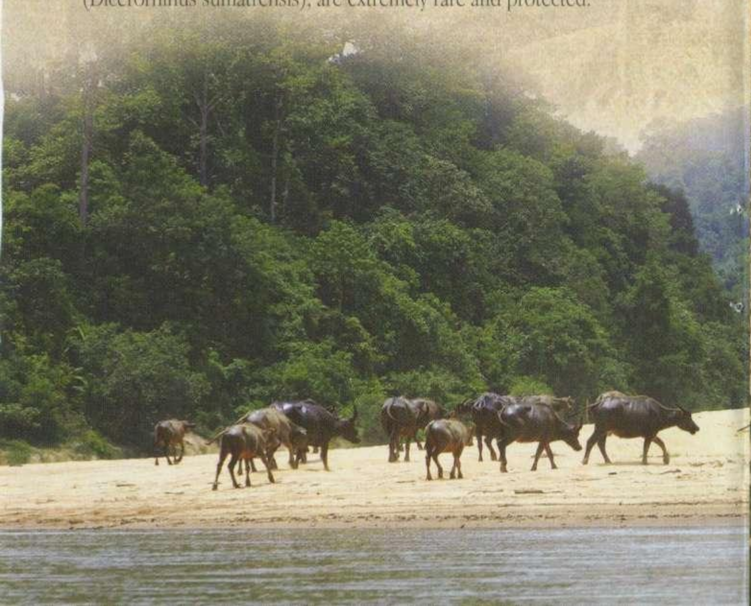
The *Tualang*
tallest tree in Southeast Asia

Living Secrets



Huge or tiny and of every imaginable type of animal life, Taman Negara's faunal community holds many secrets of the living ecosystem.

The dipterocarp rainforests that cover most of the park are rich in amazingly diverse wildlife from great mammals to miniscule insects. Some species in Taman Negara, such as the Sumatran rhinoceros (Dicerorhinus sumatrensis), are extremely rare and protected.

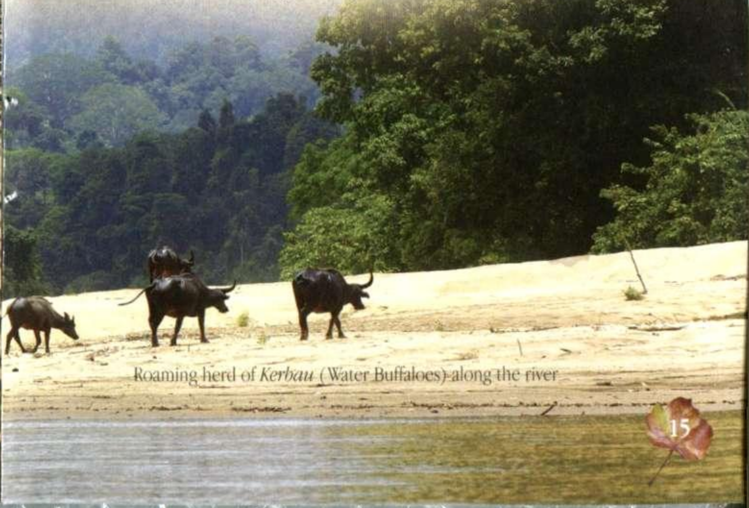






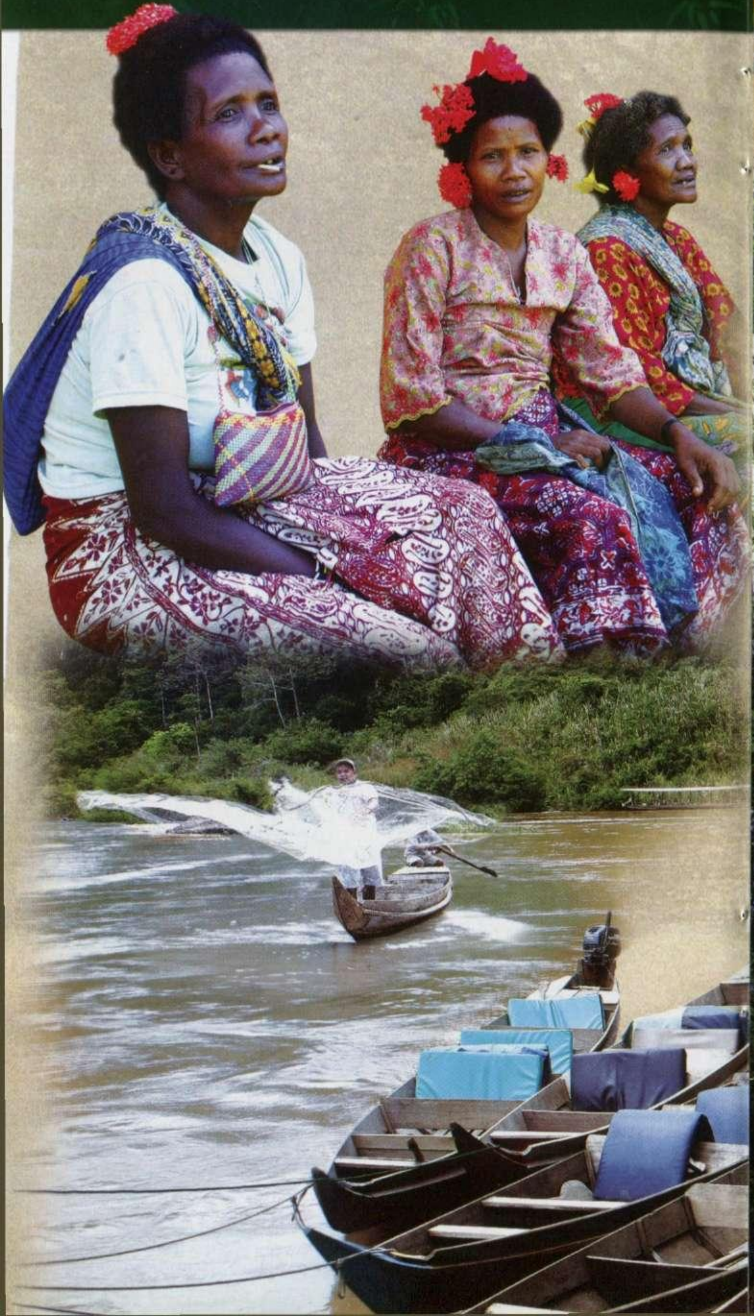
The diversity of life is no accident. Abundant food plants, water and habitat variety provide all the necessary living requirements for wildlife survival and variety.

The circle of life is very fragile and interdependent. From the park's great Asian elephants and primates to the lesser herbivores that feed the great carnivores, chief among them the Malayan tiger, and on to the big or small birds, reptiles and fish until the smallest tick and worm there is an important place for each in the scheme of life in Taman Negara.



Roaming herd of *Kerbau* (Water Buffaloes) along the river

Ancient Aboriginal Culture





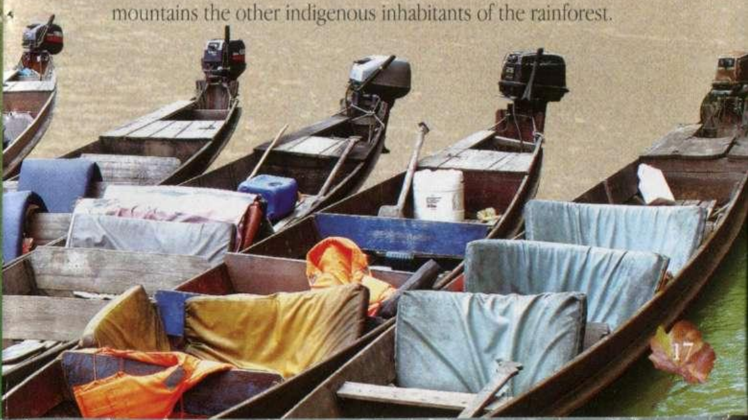


From time immemorial, there have always been small groups of Aboriginal people or Orang Asli known as Batek, living in the jungles even before Taman Negara became a gazetted park, as well as many local Malay villagers in the surrounding areas and rivers.

Traditionally they have led subsistence and thus environment friendly lives entirely dependent on the jungle and local produce. The Orang Asli as well as the traditional Malay villagers have intimate knowledge of the jungle, and most jungle flora, fauna and features already have local names.

To the Orang Asli especially, who have lived all their ancestral lives in the jungle, the rainforest is a veritable supermarket, where they obtain just about everything necessary for life from all parts of plants and animals that abound in the surrounding environment.

And with their intimacy with the jungle, the Orang Asli as well as local Malay villagers share certain local beliefs about their jungle. There are things sacred and things taboo; and belief in the spirits or *semangat* that dwell among the trees and rocks, rivers and mountains the other indigenous inhabitants of the rainforest.



Tips for Trips & Thrills



A range of exciting activities await the intrepid visitor to Taman Negara. Not all the four park entry points offer the same activities, and each has its own unique features.

Rivers and Waterfalls

Shooting the rapids is a must for all thrillseekers. White water rafting sites include upstream Sungai Tembeling from Kuala Tahan; experience an hour of raw water power as you and your boatmates negotiate seven sets of rapids.



Alternatively go for traditional bamboo rafting from Kuala Pertang to Kuala Koh. Kayaking can also be done.





For more leisurely activities, swimming at all entryways is safe at designated spots that are so pristine you never want to leave the water. Otherwise picnic trips to gushing waterfalls such as Lata Berkoh upstream from Kuala Tahan offer another way to commune with nature.

Fishing and Angling

A true anglers' paradise, the park's rivers sport popular species such as *kelisa* (arowana), *toman* (snakehead), *sebarau* and the prized *kelah* (Malayan mahseer). Many of the local species are large and aggressive, providing a great challenge for fishing enthusiasts. Note that some areas have forbidden zones where fish sanctuaries are located.

Bird Watching

With about 350 species of birds in the whole park including Drongos, Malkohas and the Pied Hornbill, Taman Negara is naturally one of the prime birding spots in the region.

Spelunking or Caving

With so many unspoilt caves to be explored, Taman Negara is a spelunker's limestone forest haven. *Gua* is the word for cave in Malay, and most have spectacular rock formations and a great variety of flora and fauna to be discovered. Some caves even have valuable prehistoric finds, and many caves are still subject to archaeological study. Take part in this speleological discovery.

Taste of Trails & Treks





Jungle Trekking

Trekking is the most popular activity as it is simple and for everyone to choose how strenuous they wish it to be. Nothing beats a closer look at all the different species of flora that can be found in this jungle paradise, and perhaps some big fauna here and there. Having a guide is best to help you uncover the secrets of the forest, especially for night trekking to see nocturnal jungle life.



Canopy Walkway

One destination for your trekking would be the park's canopy walkways to get a bird's eye view of the world's oldest rainforest. These have been built at Kuala Tahan and also at Kuala Koh. By the way, Kuala Tahan's canopy walkway is the longest in the world at almost $^{1}/_{2}$ a kilometre in length and should not be missed.

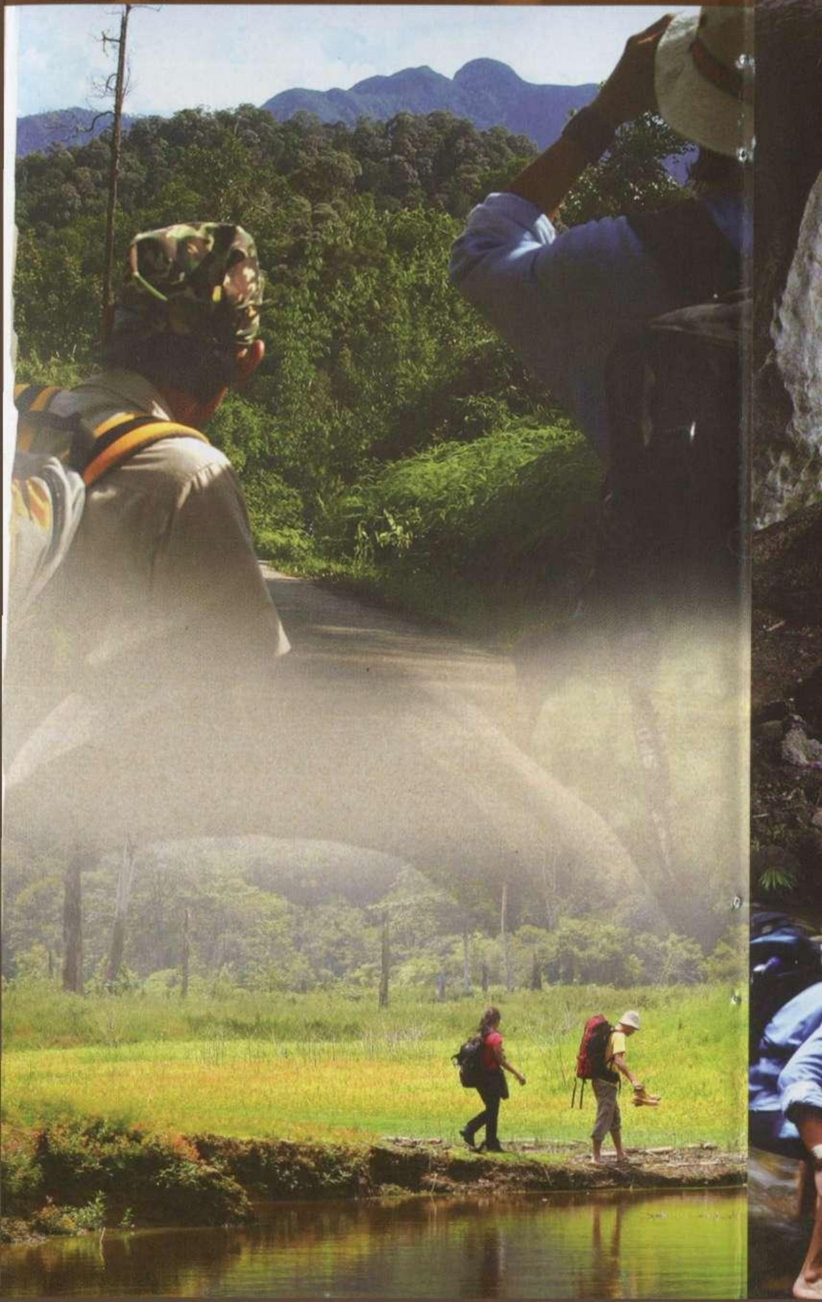
Observation Hides

If your trails and treks have still not shown you any wild animals, don't despair. Tropical fauna, even large predators, are by nature fairly shy and prefer to be hidden. This is why various *bumbun* or jungle hides have been built near wildlife frequented salt licks.

These are simple high sheds with basic amenities such as a toilet and a place to sleep, from where you can wait overnight for animals to come by.



Trudge to the Tops





Mountain Climbing

If climbing up mountain tops is your cup of tea, Taman Negara is the place to be. The park hosts Gunung Tahan, which at 2,187m is the highest peak in the southernmost part of the Asian continent. The challenging summit can be reached by trekking, river fording and climbing over 3 to 8 days; this depends from either Sungai Relau (closest point), Kuala Tahan, or Kuala Koh (most challenging route) at more than a week's round trip.

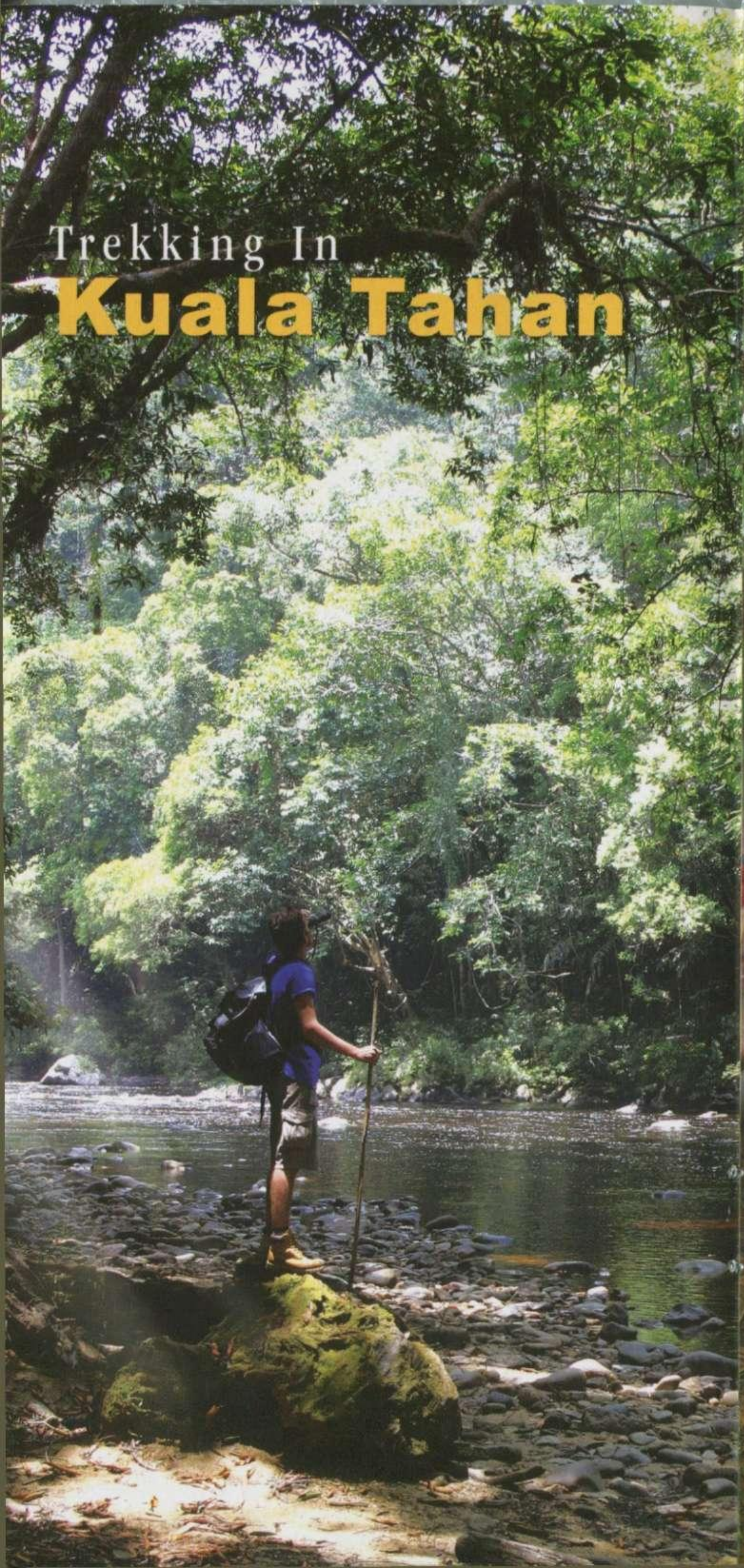
Taman Negara's other entry point of Tanjung Mentong at Tasik Kenyir is the trudging off point to another of the park's popular climbs, Gunung Gagau at 1,376m.

A local guide is required for any mountain climbing expedition in Taman Negara.

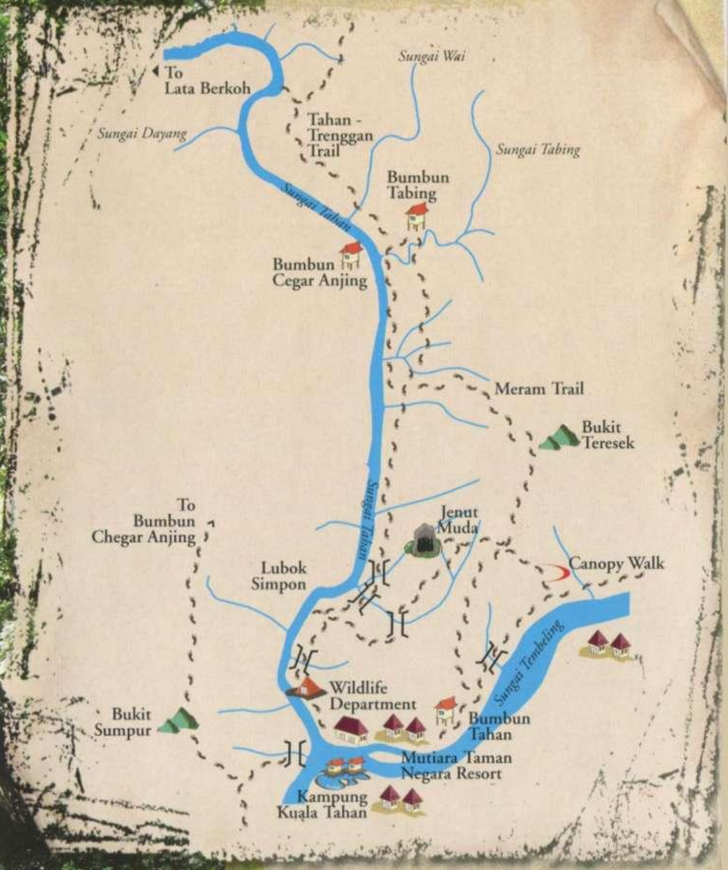


Trekking In

Kuala Tahan







The Kuala Tahan entry point, either by scenic boat ride via Sungai Tembeling river or driving up the rural road to Kuala Tahan village, is the nearest route from Kuala Lumpur and generally the most popular. This entryway has the most number and choice of accommodation and food, as well as all types of recreational activities and facilities.

How to Get There

The nearest major town is Jerantut, Pahang. The journey from Kuala Lumpur or Kuantan by car or public transport takes about 3 hours. From Jerantut, visitors can either take a bus or taxi to the Kuala Tembeling Jetty, 16km from Jerantut, for the boat ride.







Visitors can also take the night train, which stops at the Kuala Tembeling Halt. From Kuala Tembeling Jetty the boat trip is about 3 hours upriver to reach Kuala Tahan.

The boat fare is RM22 per person. Boats leave at 9am and 2pm daily.





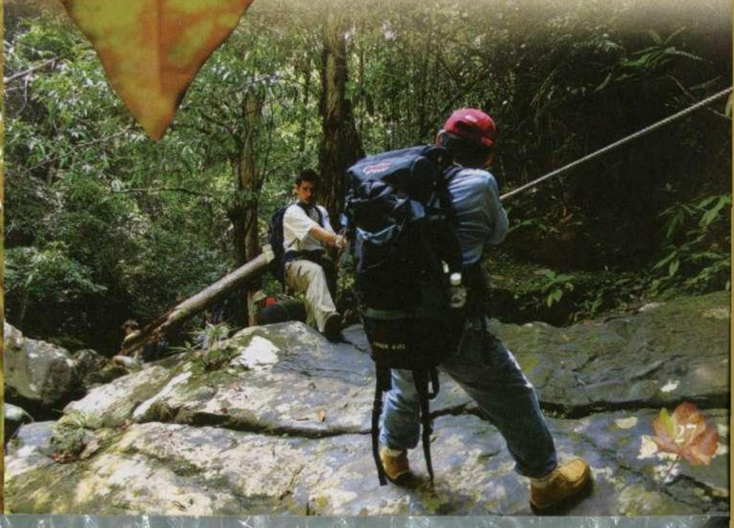


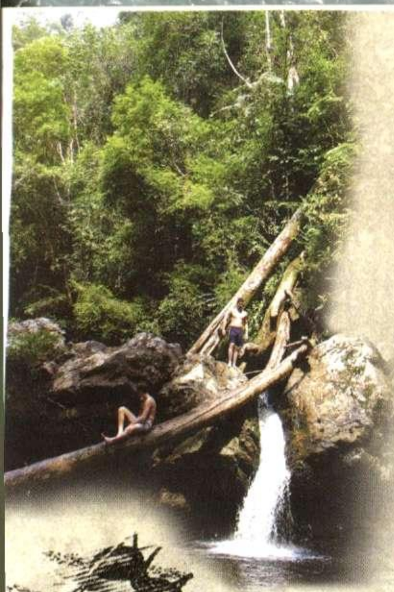
Permit and Licence

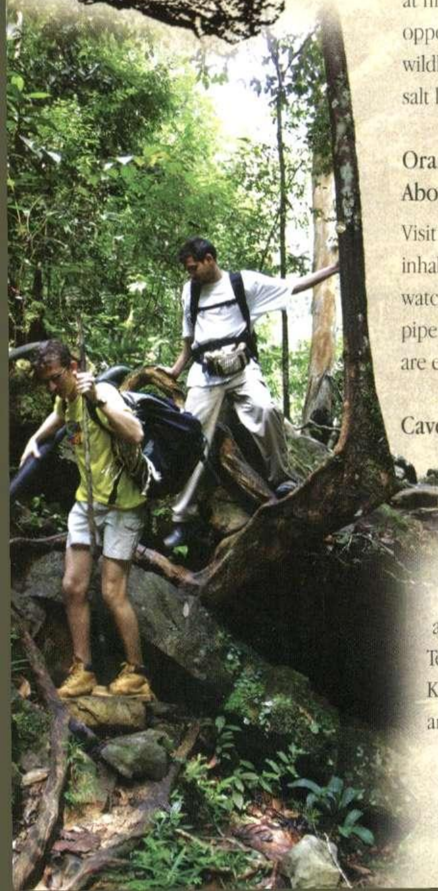
Each visitor must obtain an entrance permit at RM1 per person. A fishing licence costs RM10 while a camera licence is RM5 per camera.

Accommodation

Kuala Tahan village just across Sungai Tahan located just outside the park has several local homegrown resorts, consisting of chalets, hostels, suites and some bungalows. Camping sites are also available. The more luxurious Mutiara Taman Negara Resort is situated by the river within the park's boundary. Seminars and corporate functions incorporating nature activities can be held here.







Recreational Activities

Jungle Trekking and Canopy Walkway

See Taman Negara from the longest canopy walkway in the world spanning 450m, suspended 40m above ground. Maybe not for the faint-hearted!

Bumbun (Observation Hides)

Tropical wildlife are by nature shy and camouflaged, and not easily sighted just by jungle trekking. Stay quietly overnight at hides and get a better opportunity to observe wildlife visiting the mineral salt licks nearby.

Orang Asli Aboriginal Settlement

Visit the friendly native inhabitants, the Batek, and watch their fascinating blow-pipe and fire-making skills which are essential to their lifestyle.

Cave Exploration

Explore the unspoilt limestone forest comprising some of the most beautiful stalactite and stalagmite adorned caves such as Gua Telinga, Gua Peningat, Gua Kepayang, Gua Daun Menari and Gua Besar.





River and Waterfall Exploration

A boat trip up Sungai Tembeling is one of the most exciting activities. Encounter numerous rapids and get splashed along the way. Take a ride to the popular Lata Berkoh waterfalls, a great picnic and swimming area surrounded by inspiring natural landscapes.



Fishing

Check out the cool fishing spots at Sungai Tahan and Sungai Keniam.

Bird Watching

It's bird watching galore with 54 per cent of the 650 species of known birds of Malaysia found in Taman Negara.



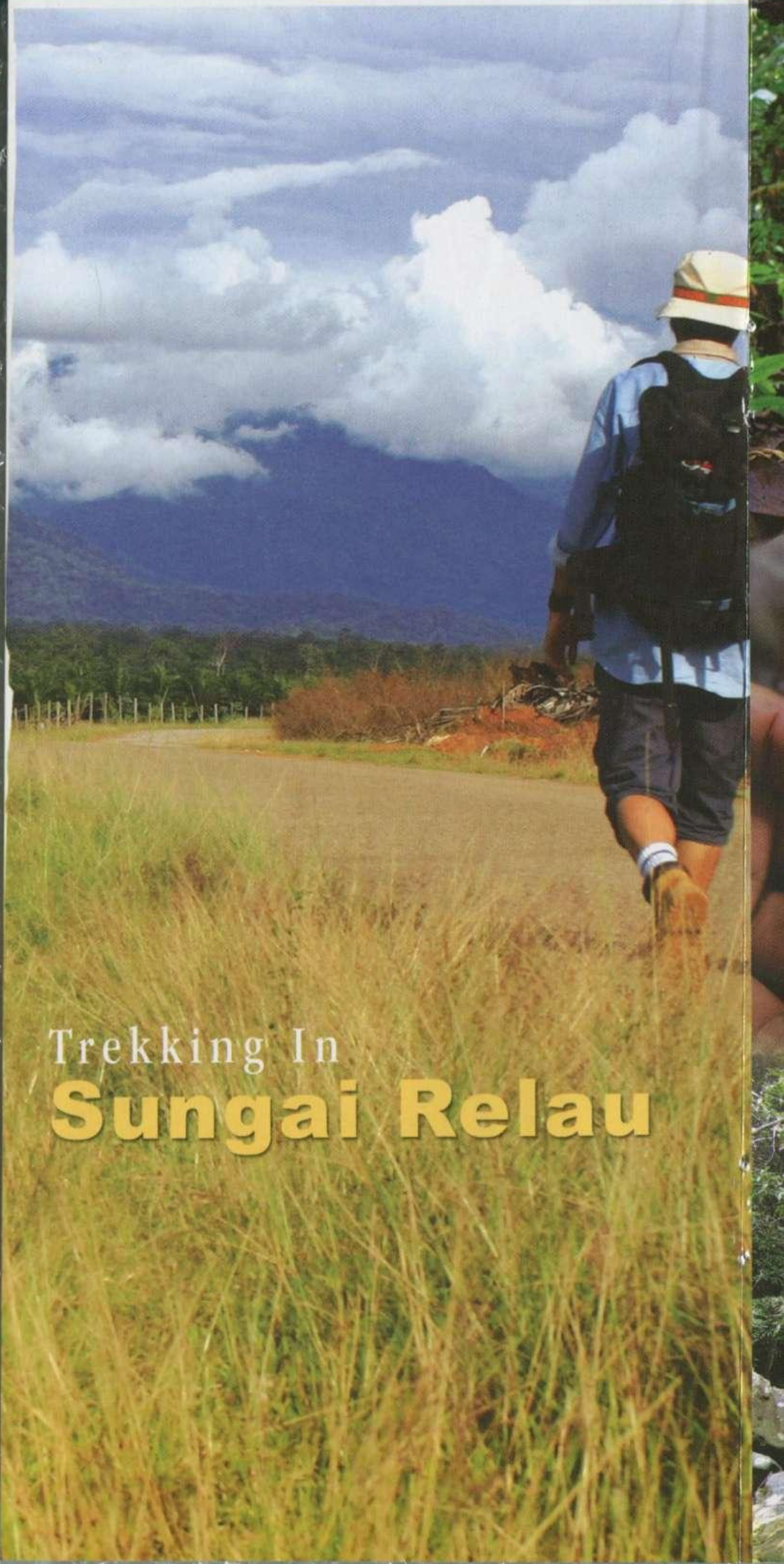
Climb Gunung Tahan

The highest peak in Peninsular Malaysia takes at least 7 days to scale from Kuala Tahan with its steep slopes, and conquering the tricky rivers to get there is part of the adventure.

For more information, contact:

Department of Wildlife and National Parks

Km 10, Jalan Cheras
56100 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 603 9075 2872
Fax: 603 9075 2873
E-mail: pakp@wildlife.gov.my



Trekking In
Sungai Relau

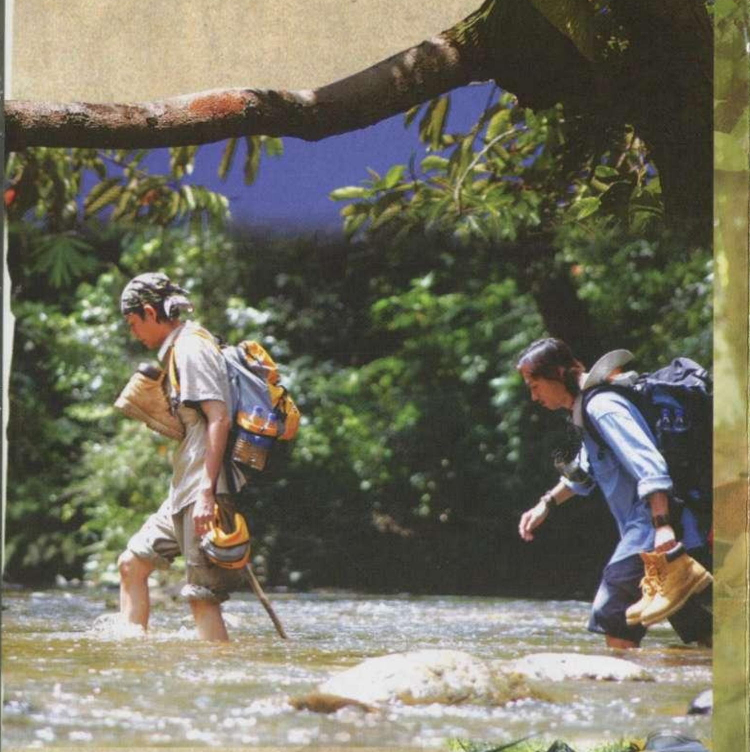


The Sungai Relau entry point, of which Merapoh is the nearest small town, is marked by limestone hills with a number of caves. This point is the closest and easiest to conquer Gunung Tahan. Also note that fishing is forbidden here as it is a fish-breeding sanctuary; instead you feed the fish and call them to meals by a unique method.



How to Get There

Visitors can either drive or take the public transport, passing through the towns of Kuala Lipis or Gua Musang along the Kuala Lumpur–Kota Bharu main road. Those taking the train disembark at Merapoh Station.



Permit and Licence

Each visitor must obtain an entrance permit at RM1 per person. A fishing licence costs RM10 while a camera licence is RM5 per camera.



A giant mushroom



Accommodation

Besides a 40-bed hostel, 13-room rest house and camping facilities in Sungai Relau, there is a 60-bed hostel in Sungai Juram (RM10 per person/night). There are also camping grounds that can accommodate 50 campers at any one time at RM1 per person/night. The 4WD transportation from Sungai Relau to the hostel in Sungai Juram costs RM7.50 per person for a single journey.

Recreational Activities

Climb Gunung Tahan

One main activity here is the climb to Gunung Tahan, which takes about 3 days to and fro, less than the 7 days via Kuala Tahan or more from Kuala Koh.





A *Landak* (Porcupine) foraging for food

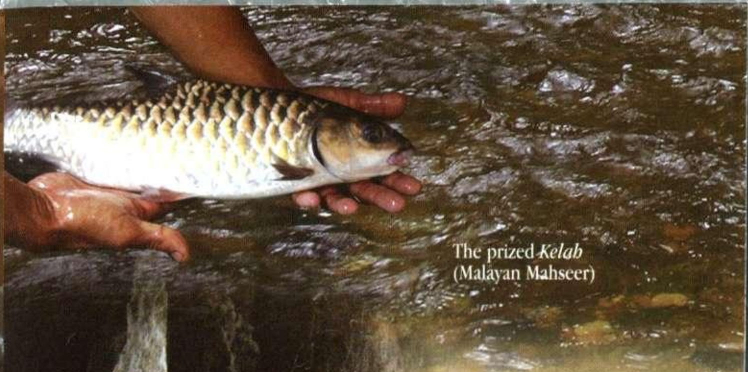


Night Walk and Night Safari

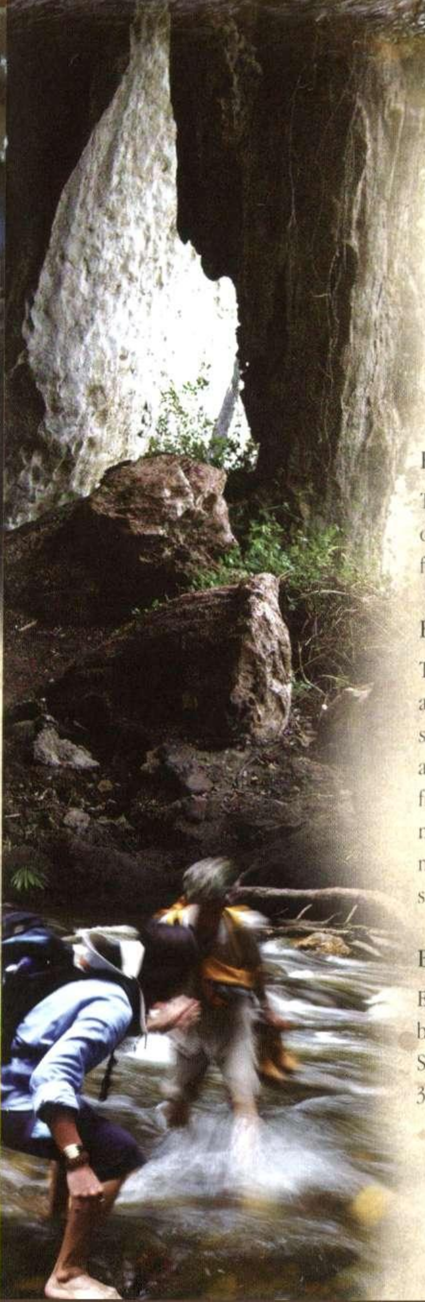
Both activities involve guided excursions at night with flash lights, as most animals are more active during the dark. While one is just trek-walking, the other involves a 4WD ride further afield. Potentially seen are the wildcat, fox, wild boar, slow loris and others.







The prized *Kelab* (Malayan Mahseer)



Cave Exploration

Two interesting caves near here can be explored. Gua Gajah about 5.5 km away is named after the elephants that are often seen in the area. Gua Peningat about 8.8 km away is a honey bee sanctuary.

River Activities

The clear and refreshingly cool river water here is ideal for swimming.

Fish-feeding

This is a designated fish sanctuary area, especially for kelah species, so fishing is prohibited. A popular activity here is to watch the freshwater fish up close in their natural habitat and to feed them – most amazingly they can be summoned by ringing a bell!

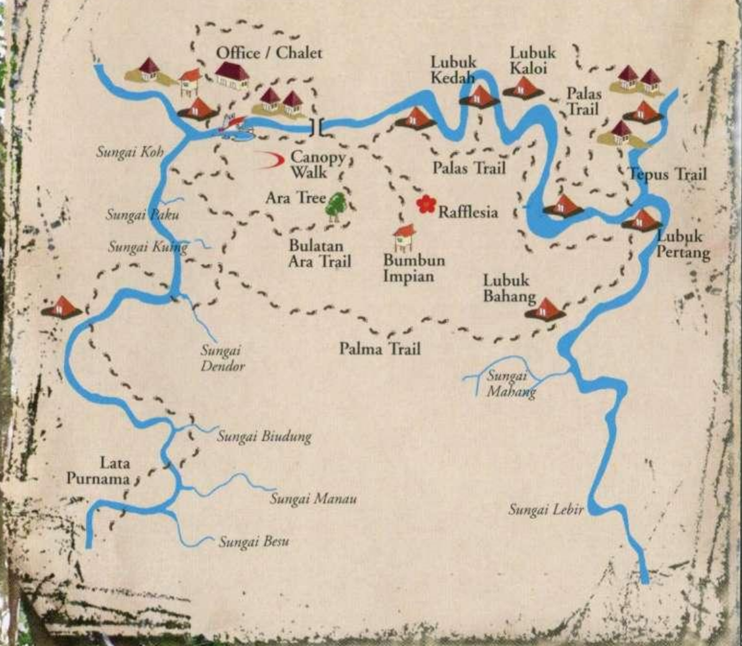
Bird Watching

Early morning and evening are the best times to see local birds in the Sungai Relau area, with more than 300 species previously identified.



Trekking In
Kuala Koh



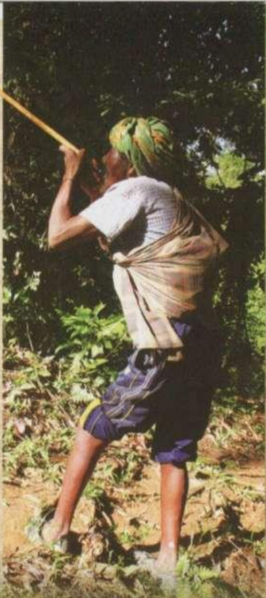




The entrance to the Kelantan side of Taman Negara was only opened in 1995. Although it is a slope-filled area with many bamboo species, the name Koh comes from the local Kelantanese name for a type of palm; known in standard Malay as *palma daun payung* and is seen along the upper estuaries at 1,000m high. Kuala Koh is also a historic area where Mat Kilau, a Malay warrior who fought against British occupation, lived in and launched his resistance efforts. This entryway is said to have the best potential for wildlife sighting, maybe due to the denser undisturbed jungle.

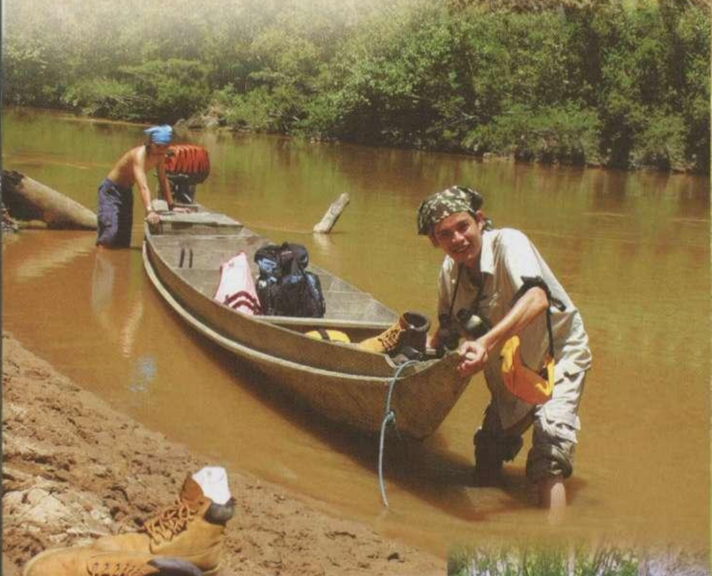
How to Get There

Visitors can either drive or take the public transport to Kuala Koh from Gua Musang in Kelantan. There is a road connecting this park entrance to the Gua Musang Kuala Krai main road.



Permit and Licence

Each visitor must obtain an entrance permit at RM1 per person. A fishing licence costs RM10 while a camera licence is RM5 per camera.

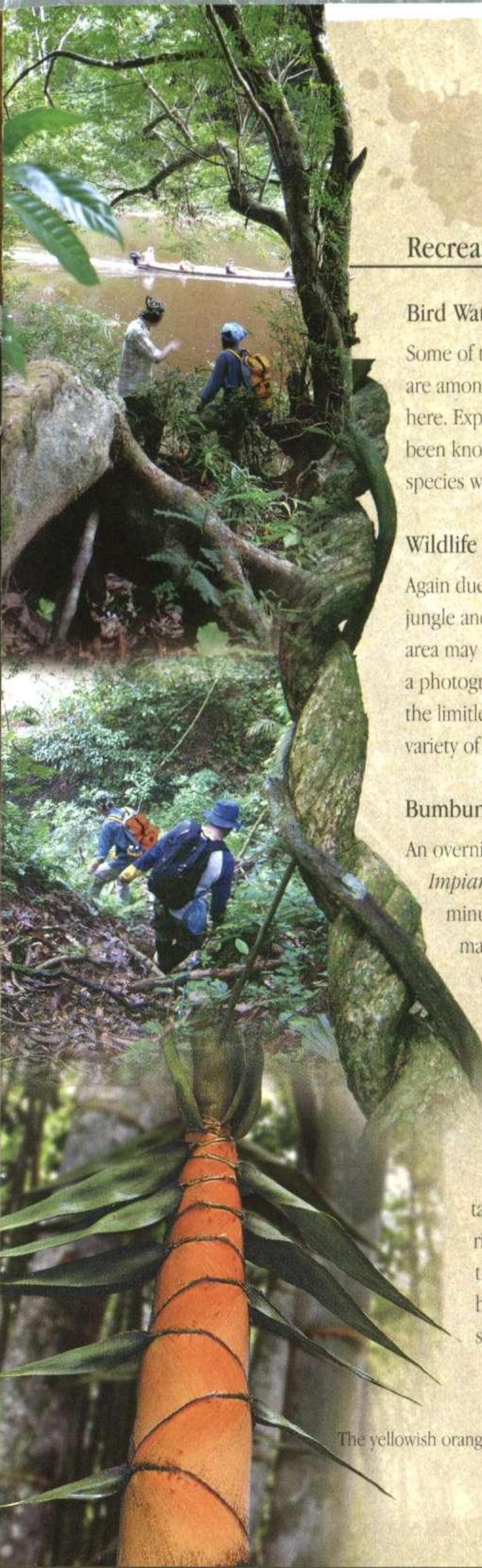


Accommodation

There are 6 chalets and a 74-bed hostel. Rates are RM30 for a chalet and RM5 per person for the hostel. Campers are charged RM1 each.







Recreational Activities

Bird Watching

Some of the rarer dense jungle birds are among the over 200 species seen here. Experienced bird watchers have been known to spot more than 150 species within a few days.

Wildlife Photography

Again due to the dense unspoilt jungle and undulating terrain, this area may afford more opportunity as a photographer's paradise. Explore the limitless possibilities with a variety of flora and fauna.

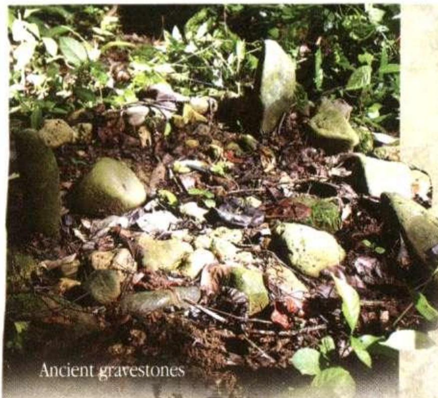
Bumbun (Observation Hides)

An overnight stay at the *Bumbun Impian* high hide, about 30 minutes hike from Kuala Koh, may reward you with views of the shy tropical wildlife visiting the salt licks nearby.

Fishing

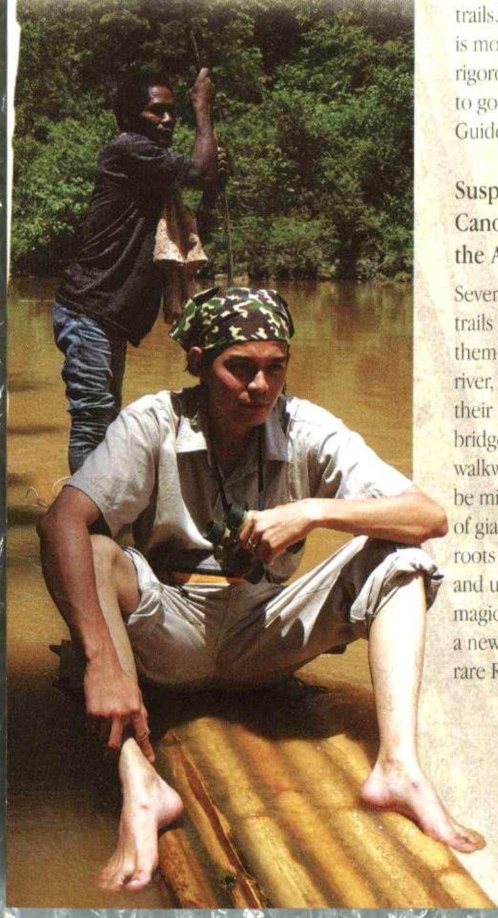
There are some great fishing spots here. However, take note that in certain rivers fishing is prohibited, as these rivers are designated breeding grounds for local species of fish.

The yellowish orange *Rebung* bamboo



Ancient gravestones





Orang Asli Aboriginal Settlement

Visit the friendly native inhabitants, the Batek, and let them regale you with ancient jungle tales as they demonstrate their fascinating blow-pipe and fire-making skills.

Climb Gunung Tahan

The trail to Gunung Tahan from Kuala Koh offers an alternative route to the Kuala Tahan and Merapoh–Sungai Relau trails. The Kuala Koh trail is more challenging and rigorous, as climbers have to go through steep ridges. Guides are available.

Suspended Bridge, Canopy Walkway and the Ara Circle

Several interesting jungle trails are available. One of them is located across the river, where visitors make their way via a suspended bridge and on to a canopy walkway. A highlight not to be missed is an aged circle of giant *ara* (Ficus spp.) roots that you can walk in and under, giving a magical feel. There is also a newly-discovered rare Rafflesia trail.





Kayaking or Rafting

The crystal-clear rivers around Kuala Koh provide the perfect spots for kayaking, or bamboo rafting from Kuala Pertang to Kuala Koh. The trip takes about 2 hours.

For more information, contact:

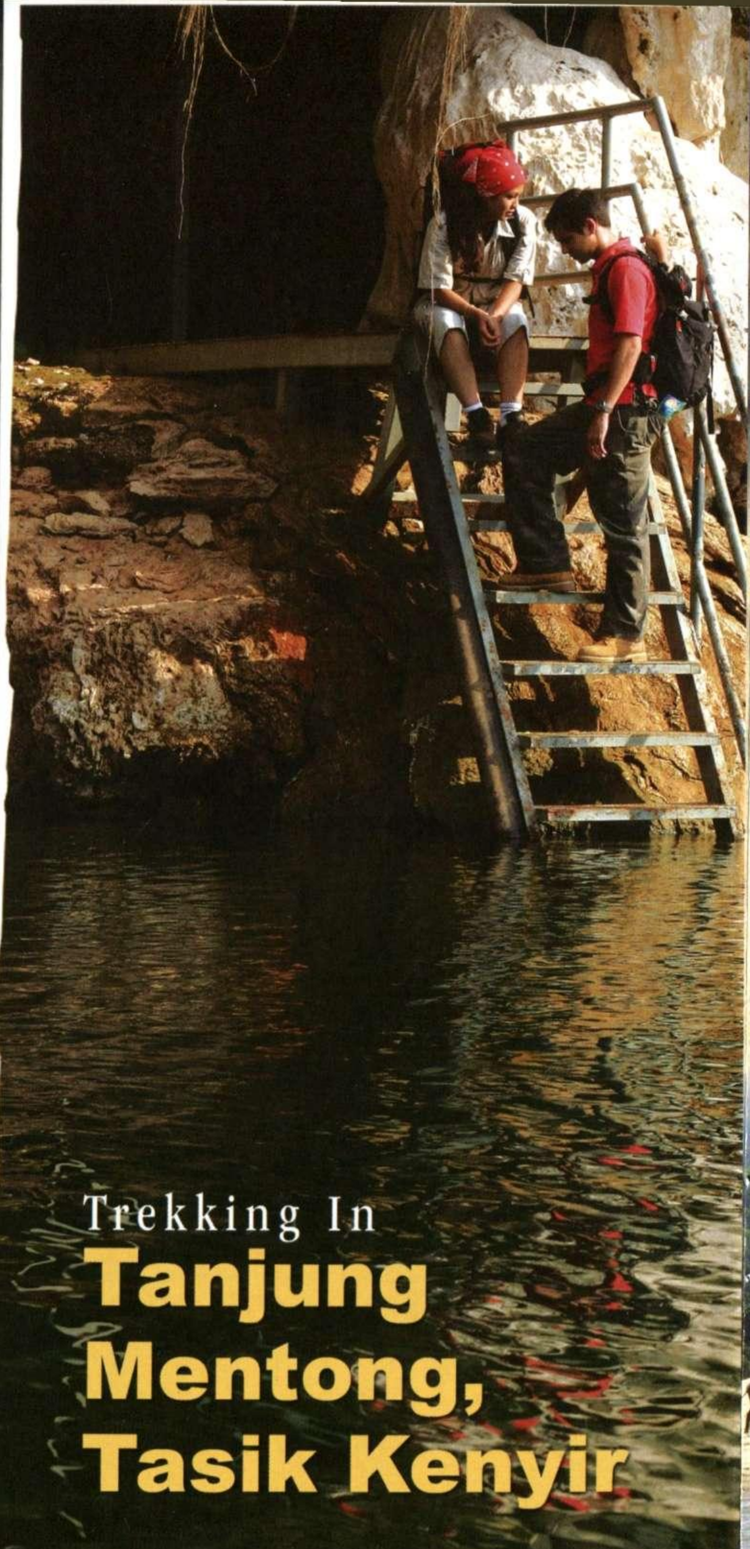
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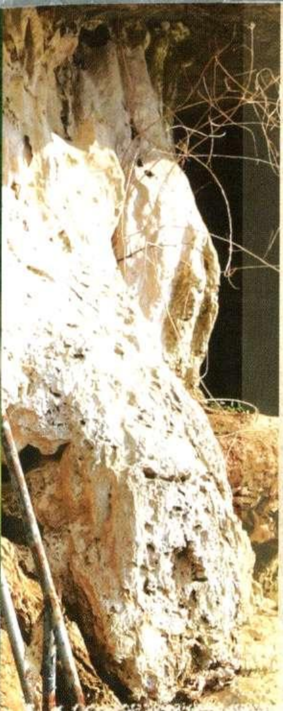
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The *Tualang* - tallest tree in Southeast Asia



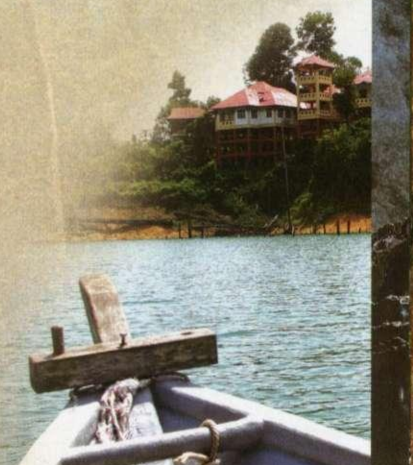
Trekking In Tanjung Mentong, Tasik Kenyir



This entrance into Taman Negara is quite different from the rest as it passes through Tasik Kenyir, Southeast Asia's largest man-made lake at 260,000 hectares and a nature recreation area in itself. A southern arm of the lake lies within Taman Negara containing some interesting caves and submerged forest views not found at the other entryways.



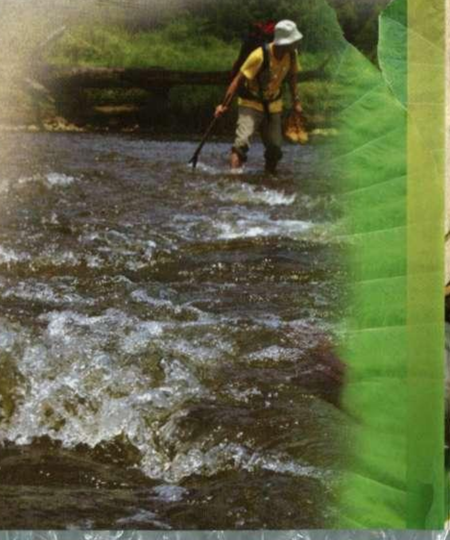
How to Get There



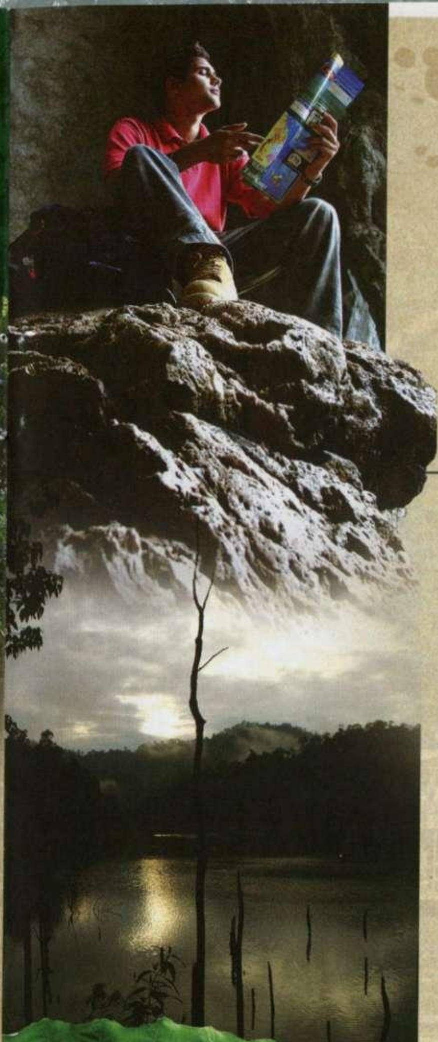
Visitors can reach Tanjung Mentong through the 2 jetties in Gawi or Jenagor, all in Terengganu. The town of Kuala Berang is the nearest town. The motorboat trip cuts across Tasik Kenyir in about 45 minutes.



Permit and License



Each visitor must obtain an entrance permit at RM1 per person. A fishing licence costs RM10 while a camera licence is RM5 per camera.



Accommodation

There are 5 chalets and a 60-bed hostel. Rates are RM30 for a chalet and RM10 per person for the hostel. Campers are charged RM1 each.

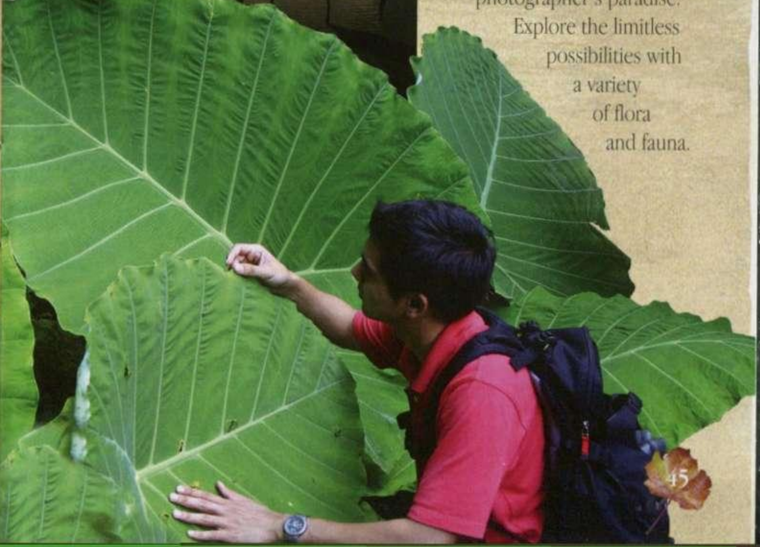
Recreational Activities

Fishing

Due to the lake environment, there are some great fishing spots here. However, take note that in Sungai Cacing, fishing is off limits as it is a designated breeding area for local species of fish such as *kelah*.

Scenic and Wildlife Photography

Again due to the lake with its submerged jungle trees and many hill islands, this area may afford the opportunity as a photographer's paradise. Explore the limitless possibilities with a variety of flora and fauna.







Cave Exploration

There are 2 important caves, Gua Bewah and Gua Taat, the latter has yielded Stone Age discoveries. Archaeologists have found artifacts such as kitchen utensils, axes and tools dating back to the Neolithic Age (4000 BC). Interestingly, the mouth of the cave would have been high up the hill and was only made more accessible once the man-made Tasik Kenyir filled up.

Climb Gunung Gagau

This popular mountain-climbers' destination in Taman Negara at 1,376m affords views of all 3 states in the park from its peak.





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Tips for a Terrific Time



- Visitors are reminded that, as a protected National Park, nothing is to be damaged in or taken out of Taman Negara.
- When jungle trekking, find out and choose a trail that you can complete before dark. Do not stray off the trail – the rainforest is dense and you can easily lose your orientation away from paths.
- Always let a responsible person know of your plans for the day, especially if going alone.
- Enter the jungle with a sense of respect and humility. Be as quiet as possible to avoid alarming other beings.
- Take plenty of water and some snacks. Unless trekking with a guide, it is not advisable to eat jungle fruits or drink from any water source.
- Wear light, loose clothing; comfortable long-sleeved shirts and long pants for protection from insects, leeches, thorny plants and abrasions.
- Wear roomy, light but sturdy footwear with good ankle support and traction, and two pairs of socks to prevent blisters for long treks.
- A hat with a wide brim to shade against intense sunshine and light rain is advisable. For longer treks, pack a poncho or other rain gear.
- When going camping, pack as light as possible. Use a comfortable rucksack with padded shoulder straps, hip belt and internal frame.
- Bring a map and compass for navigating deeper jungle trails – under some dense jungle canopies the sun might not be clearly seen. A whistle is a useful tool for attracting attention in emergencies.
- In certain conditions, the forest can get very cold – bring a waterproof jacket for comfort.
- A basic first aid kit for the treatment of wounds and bites is advisable.
- For longer trips, bring extra batteries for your torchlight; candles and matches.
- Choose a clear camping site free of debris and away from rotting trees. During rainy periods, do not camp too near a river – pick a higher spot.
- Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but memories.



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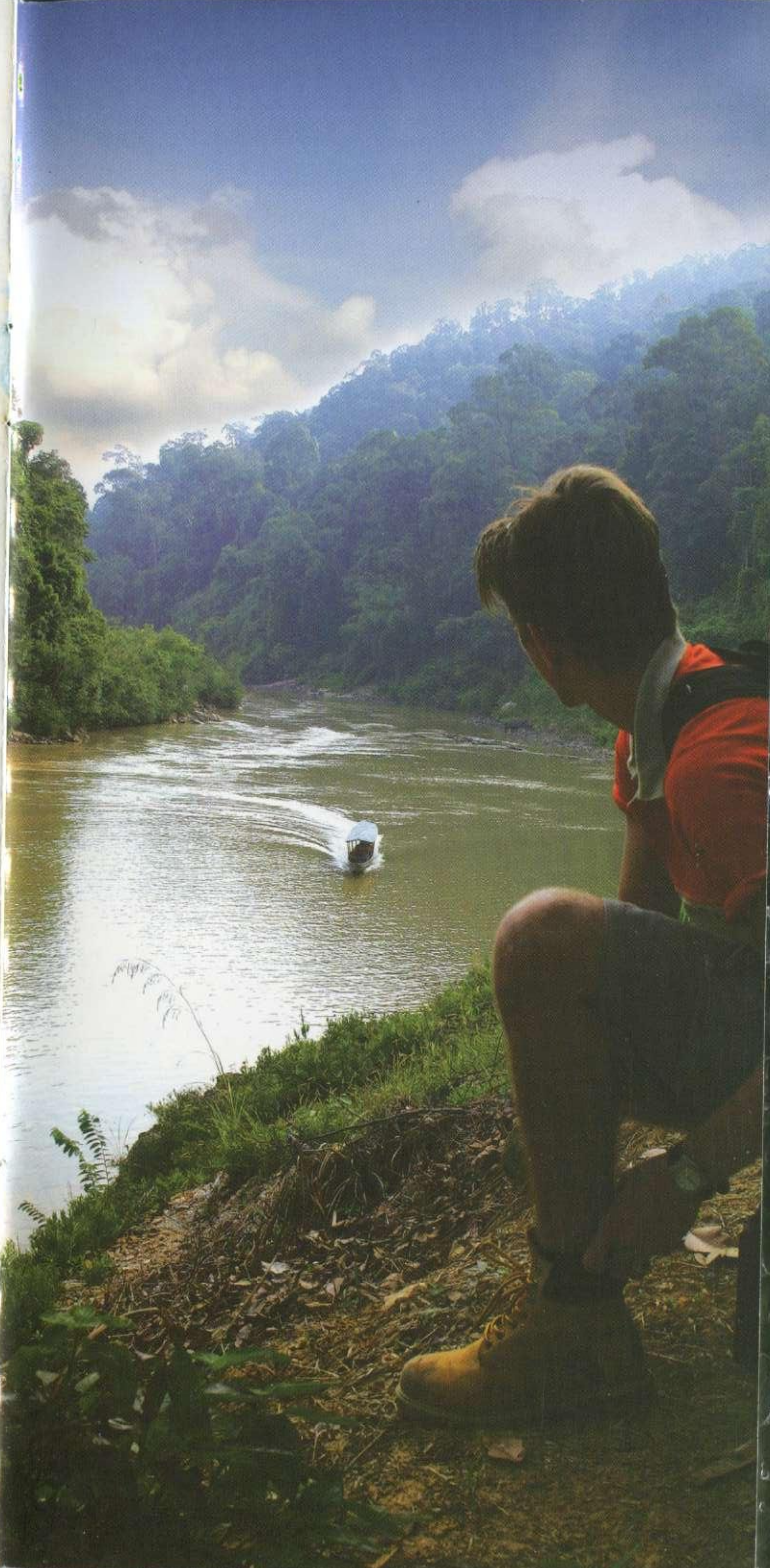
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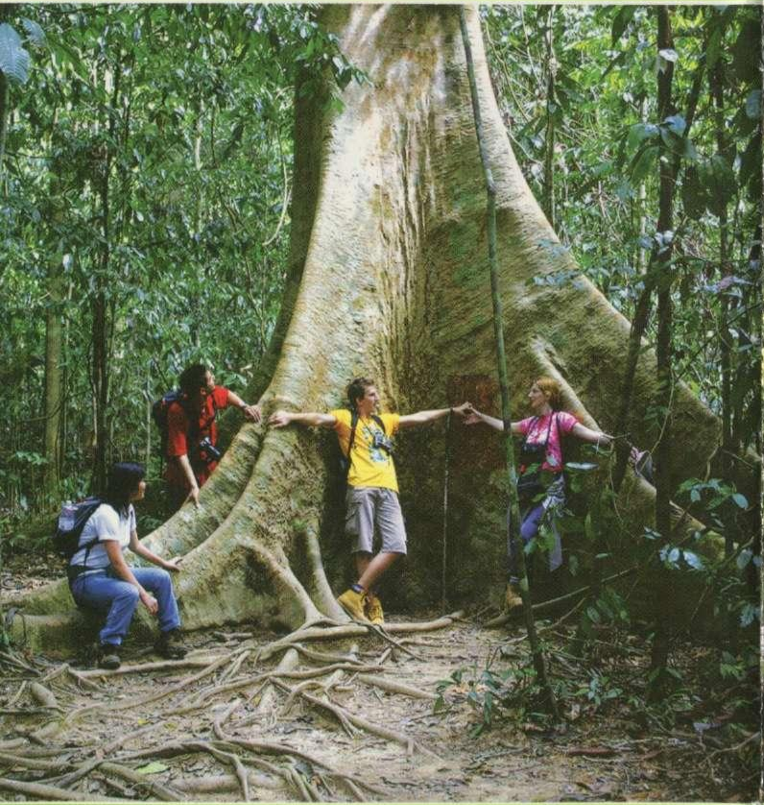
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(TRAFFICKING IN ILLEGAL DRUGS CARRIES THE DEATH PENALTY)

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